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TRIBUTE

OF THE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OF THE

STATE OF NEW-YORK

TO THE MEMORY OF

JAMES M. BROWN,

President of the Chamber from 1884 to 1887.

NEW-YORK:
PRESS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

1890.

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TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF

JAMES M. BROWN.

At the regular monthly meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, held Thursday, October 2, 1890, Mr. Alexander E. Orr, the Vice-President, said:

Gentlemen: It is always a sad duty to announce the death of a fellow member—to inform you that one with whom we have been accustomed to associate shall meet with us no more—but it is far harder and sadder when that one had made himself dear to us all by his manliness, his kindly courtesy, his sterling integrity, his patriotism in the dark hours of his country's need, and his upright Christian character, and who, in recognition of all this, had received from us the highest honor that it is in our gift to bestow.

With profound feelings of sorrow I make the announcement that JAMES M. BROWN, for over thirty years a member, and from 1884 to 1887 the President of the Chamber of Commerce, departed this life at Manchester, Vermont, on the nineteenth day of July last.

As it is the rule of the Chamber to suspend its meetings during the months of July, August and September of each year, we have been unable to take appropriate action till to-day, (although we were officially represented at the funeral.) I therefore ask you now to suspend the regular order of business that suitable resolutions and remarks relative to our deceased member, Ex-President and friend, may be presented for your respectful consideration.

RESOLUTIONS.

Mr. HENRY F. SPAULDING, in behalf of the Executive Committee, offered the following resolutions:

Resolved, That by the death of JAMES M. BROWN this Chamber has lost one of its most valuable members, and the community a sincerely, honored and highly respected citizen.

Resolved, That as a merchant and banker, his enterprise, his systematic attention to business

affairs, his unvarying good faith and fidelity, and his unstained integrity entitles his name to a conspicuous place in the commercial annals of the country. The Chamber desires to bear its testimony to his manliness and kindness of heart, to his elevated Christian character, to his liberality and activity in works of charity, and to the unostentatious simplicity of his private life.

Resolved, That in common with the whole commercial community of this City, we respectfully tender our sympathy to his mourning family and friends, and that these resolutions, together with the remarks that may be made on this occasion by his former associates, be communicated to them as a token of our regard.

REMARKS OF MR. SAMUEL D. BABCOCK.

Mr. President: I second most heartily the resolutions just presented with reference to our former President, the late James M. Brown, and I am sure we must all feel that they portray with conciseness and fidelity the character of the man. He was one of the older members of the Chamber, and for a long period served most satisfactorily as Vice-President and President. It was my privilege to be an official with him in this body for many years, as well as to

be associated with him in several other organizations. Reviewing our experience in these relations, and our acquaintance which commenced nearly half a century ago, I can say without exaggeration that he lived on a plane above the large majority of men whom I have met, either in business or social circles. No questionable transaction found a place in his long and useful career among us.

Though somewhat reserved in manner, he was thoroughly sincere, and promptitude, earnestness and conscientiousness were among his prominent characteristics.

Unlike many occupying a conspicuous position, he was alive to the claims which the community had upon him, and he gave liberally of his time and means to good works. The records of churches, hospitals, charitable institutions, and of numerous secular corporations, bear testimony to his valuable and disinterested services.

I saw Mr. Brown shortly before he left for the country. He had then reached the Psalmist's limit of human life, but he appeared to me, both mentally and physically, twenty years younger. A few days later I was shocked by the news of his death, which came so suddenly, that he was probably unconscious of its approach, and he passed away without the suspense and suffering incident to protracted illness.

Among the positions held by our departed friend,

was that of Trustee of Greenwood Cemetery; in its management, as elsewhere, he was prompt and efficient, and he always manifested a deep interest in its affairs.

In that great City of the dead his mortal remains found a resting place, over them the autumnal winds sing a requiem, but we may confidently believe that the disembodied spirit, freed from the burden of the flesh, has passed through the golden gates of the Celestial City, and entered upon a higher state of existence in the life eternal.

REMARKS OF MR. WILLIAM E. DODGE.

Mr. President: We are all real mourners to-day. In the death of our honored associate, who was so long the presiding officer of this Chamber, we each of us feel a sense of personal loss.

In speaking of his life and services, as you have kindly asked me to do, I want to emphasize one fact, which ought to bring much cheer and comfort to us, even in the sadness of a memorial service.

We are apt to take gloomy views of the future of our City, and to believe that greed, selfishness and evil influences in our government have entirely the upper hand.

We overlook, sometimes, the large number of strong, faithful and quiet men who are always open

to the call of duty, inflexible for the right, liberal, high-minded and always to be relied on in every civic emergency.

Of this class, our honored friend, whom we mourn to-day, was a fine type.

In the old story, familiar to all of us, the most wicked city of all time was doomed to destruction ; but the promise came that if ten righteous men could be found, it should be saved.

Thank God, we have in this City many score of men who love the right and cannot be tempted to evil. They are staunch, faithful, cool-headed and able. Their quiet, unseen influence is always felt and feared. They form a regulating and controlling power hard to estimate. As a leader among these men, Mr. James M. Brown had a large place. He was singularly modest and unobtrusive. His name and deeds were never heralded in the press ; but he never flinched from any duty, and his judgment was so true, and his steadiness in service so marked, that he grew quietly to be a man of great influence and of real power in the community.

As an American he had the virtues of the olden time—always putting love of country above loyalty to party. As a citizen, he was energetic, untiring and faithful.

As a banker, a model of reliability, strong good sense, true judgment and steadiness of purpose.

As a Christian gentleman, his time, his influence and his money were always open to every worthy call for help or sympathy.

Strongly attached to his own special Church, he was still in hearty accord with good men of whatever name, and ready to co-operate in a practical way with every object he believed would help men who suffered or were in need, in any part of the world.

His sympathies were broad, catholic and far-reaching, and the absence of his wise counsels will be sorely felt in many Boards of Christian and philanthropic work.

We shall cherish his memory in this Chamber, and shall always hope there may be a steady succession of men of whom he was the model and type as a saving influence in our city life.

REMARKS OF COL. FREDERICK A. CONKLING.

Mr. President: It has been my good fortune to be associated with Mr. Brown during the last thirty years in this body, and also in the Board of Governors of the New-York Hospital. Within that period I have passed several summers under the same roof with him and his family. In this way the opportunity has been afforded to observe the daily beauty of his life, and to form an esteem for

him which makes his removal by death a personal bereavement.

What has been said of his scrupulous sense of honor as a merchant and a banker, and of his fidelity and promptitude in the discharge of every duty of a business nature, has been so well said that I will not enlarge upon it. But I cannot permit the occasion to pass without acknowledging my indebtedness to him for much valuable counsel during the discussion in the House of Representatives of the financial policy of Mr. LINCOLN'S administration.

Residing, as I have done for forty years, almost within the shadow of the Church of the Ascension, I may be permitted to refer briefly to his religious life. Since he succeeded his brother, the late lamented Mr. STEWART BROWN, as a Vestryman of that Parish, and subsequently as a Church-Warden, his devotion to the services of the Church has been as uniform and regular as that of the Rector himself. During that period his benefactions to all the charities and beneficent purposes of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this Diocese have not been surpassed by those of any other communicant. I have no hesitation in making this statement, strange as it may seem to some of those present. But he has never for a moment forgotten the sublime lesson taught by Him above whose cradle shone the star of Bethlehem, whose devoted follower he was. He has not

done his alms that he might have glory of men. In doing his alms he has not let the left hand know what the right hand doeth. I may illustrate by a single instance.

Year after year, on the first Sunday in Advent, when the contributions of the people have been asked for the support of Home and Foreign Missions, invariably two bank notes, folded together, for the sum of five hundred dollars each, have been found in the plate. In a note which I have received from the Rev. Dr. Donald, the Rector of Ascension Parish, that gentleman says:

"He seldom sent a cheque to a person whom he wished to aid. He usually sent a bank note, with 'do not mention my name.' He never told me that the bank notes for missions were from him. He avoided all reference to the matter.

"His love to my Parish all the world may know. His loss to me, whom he upheld and encouraged in the first dark days of my rectorship, and afterwards in the undertakings of a renewed prosperity, none can know."

Addressing myself for a moment to his more intimate personal friends, I venture to go one step further. During his entire married life it has been his undeviating practice to assemble his family

promptly at eight o'clock in the morning for Divine worship. If for any reason the members of his household have been unable to be present, he has still knelt reverently and offered up the beautiful prayers appointed by the Church for this purpose.

He is gone, and the places which knew him will know him no more for ever. He has passed serenely from the struggles of inquiry to a certainty of knowledge, from a world of doubt to a world of truth. Well may it be said of him in the words of the sacred lyric :

> "The sweet remembrance of the just
> Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust."

REMARKS OF MR. JAMES S. T. STRANAHAN.

Mr. President : I would gladly add to what has been said, but I have no power to make an addition of the slightest kind. Indeed, I did not know of the contemplated action of the Chamber until I came here. It has occurred to me, however, that there was one point in the character of Mr. Brown and his house that has been omitted. I refer to the fact that Brown Brothers & Co., with their kindred houses in Europe and in this country, laid the foundation for the lines of steamers which now ply between New-York and the Old World. They were not encouraged as they ought to have been. It fell

to my lot, as a Member of Congress, to undertake a feeble help to that house in carrying out their great enterprise, which the Government and the people of this country failed to understand. But, sir, it is gratifying to know that the example set by that house has finally been regarded by our Government as worthy of imitation, and that that house should lead our Government, by the example thus set, to reap the crop which will honor our country, and be remembered as the early work of the house of Brown Brothers & Co.

REMARKS OF MR. HENRY HENTZ.

Mr. President: Perhaps it would not be amiss for me to mention a little incident that occurred in my early business career, with Mr. Brown. More than thirty years ago, when I was a young man, not overburdened with means, I sold a large bill of merchandise to a party, and called upon Mr. Brown to inquire about the standing of the buyer. He told me he thought he was good, and that he would be able to sell his "bills" and pay for the merchandise, but he was not able to do so. I depended upon the money to meet my engagements. I again called upon Mr. Brown and told him the condition I was in. I had what then might be considered nothing more than a piece of waste paper, a bill of lading for

four hundred and fifty bales of cotton for collateral security, upon which none of the banks would loan money. Mr. Brown asked me how much I wanted. I said, Twenty thousand dollars. He replied, "You can have it." He did not refer to the rate of interest, and, considering that I had only a slight acquaintance with him, I looked upon his act as a most generous one; hence I think it would be inappropriate to let the proceedings of this meeting pass without my making some mention of his goodness of heart to me, which I have never forgotten.

The resolutions were, by a rising vote, unanimously adopted.

Alexander E. Orr,
Vice-President.

George Wilson,
Secretary.

New-York, *October 8th*, 1890.

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